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## SOME THINGS I DID IN MY 88TH YEAR.

By CHARLES E. COX\*

Started in November on a trip from the Atlantic to the Pacific—a 4,000 mile journey.

Spent the winter on the F. A. Vanderlip 16,000 acre Palos Verdas Ranch. With me were my daughter, Mrs. Waldo P. Adams, my grandson, John Mann Vanderlip, his nurse and a maid.

We lived in the middle of three thousand acres of peas, beans, tomatoes and cucumbers. You could drive seven miles through this field of vegetables. They begin to plant in December, beginning with peas, then beans, tomatoes and cucumbers.

Besides 3,000 acres of vegetables, there are 8,000 acres of barley.

The ranch has fourteen miles of ocean front; it lies between San Pedro and Redondo, and is opposite the Catalina Islands.

We had a very completely equipped bungalow, surrounded with all kinds of flowers and flowering shrubs. It is on a high elevation, giving a magnificent view of the ocean and the Catalina Islands.

About a mile from the house is Portuguese Bend, where there had been a whaling station, now a very popular place for picnics, where we had many with Los Angeles people.

I, with my little grandson, planted a little garden, bordered with flowers. We planted peas, beans, lettuce, potatoes, carrots and corn; all were ready for use by the middle of April, except the corn, which was in silk when we left in May for our return trip from the Pacific to the Atlantic, making eight thousand miles travel.

The most interesting and exciting event was to witness a sham battle by the Pacific Naval Fleet stationed at San Pedro. Admiral Rodman had planned the most extensive battle ever

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\*Charles Epperson Cox, born in Montgomery County, Indiana, Sept. 28, 1833, came with parents to Illinois, 1837. Colonel Cox was prominent in business and political circles in Illinois for many years. In 1861 he was auditor in the Provost Marshal's office in Springfield, later was active and influential in securing congressional action for improvement of Mississippi valley rivers and harbors.

held on the Pacific. His fleet comprised 7 large warships and numerous destroyers, submarines, transports, aeroplanes, and hydroplanes.

The fleet started at 9 A. M. A fleet of destroyers preceded the battleships, towing targets quite a distance behind to represent the enemy, a few camouflage ships making a smoke screen to conceal the movements of the battle ships. When 20 miles out to sea the enemy was sighted six miles away. When the battle began, each ship had captive balloons some five hundred feet high. Aeroplanes circling over the enemy would wigwag the position to the man in the balloon, and he would telephone to the gunners. There were seven battleships, all mounted with large guns. When the battle started, all fired at once, the large guns and then smaller ones; the firing kept up eight minutes. In that time \$180,000 worth of ammunition was fired. It was a most thrilling sight to witness the wonderful display of fireworks.

It was my good fortune to be a guest of Captain Willard, commanding the "New Mexico," Admiral Rodman's flag ship. This is the largest ship in the navy.

Manned with 1700 seamen, armed with six 14-inch guns 3 forward and 3 aft—with 12 five inch guns—6 at each end. The large guns firing 1,400 pound shells, are mounted on steel-turrets 14 inches thick. I stood by these turrets while they fired. The concussion was terrific; we all had our ears filled with cotton. It was a wonderful experience to me. As I said, the "New Mexico" is the largest ship in the navy and is run by electricity. I believe it takes 50 barrels of oil a day to generate sufficient power to run the ship and operate the guns.

During our stay at the ranch, we motored over 1,000 miles.

In June I went with the whole Vanderlip family with two cars on a motor trip of about 500 miles, up through the Berkshire Hills. We touched Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont.

After the Vanderlips sailed for Europe, my daughter, Mrs. Clover Henry, her daughter, the younger two of the Vanderlip children and their nurse, in the big Pierce-Arrow touring car, motored up into New Hampshire where Frank A., Jr., was in camp. We stayed there a few days and then went to Scarborough, Maine, where we left the children and nurse.

Clover and I then motored up to Augusta, Maine, and spent a couple of days with my nephew, Dr. A. O. Thomas, who is state superintendent of schools.

We then started home down the coast, all the way from Augusta to New York, stopping at Boston and Providence. In all we motored 1,300 miles. We had delightful weather most of the time. It was a great pleasure to go through the historic places in all of the New England States. My daughter was a delightful companion, on account of her knowledge of the country.

I am now in my 89th year, and am as well physically as I was at 80 when I passed examination for insurance. I have an assessment policy. Being in California, I did not receive my assessment notice. When I got back I asked for re-examination. After a good deal of parley, they sent their doctor, who, after a thorough examination, said that I had passed as good an examination as a man of 30. Upon receiving his report, they wrote me that my condition was A1, and I was reinstated.